Seniors' News

Seniors' Secretariat

Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice Volume 114 December 2005

Executive Director's Message

by Valerie White

With the holiday season upon us, it's nice to pause and reflect on our accomplishments before charging into the year ahead. I am pleased to say that during the latter part of our 25th anniversary year at the Secretariat we achieved some real milestones.

In October, we were one of the organizing sponsors for the Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG) conference. This national conference was informative, enjoyable, and attended by close to 400 participants.

On November 2, we held our first ever Elder Abuse Awareness Day Forum and released the *Nova Scotia Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention.* You can read more about the successful day and the strategy on page 3.

We were also pleased to release the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia* on December 13 at Province House. We look forward to visiting communities across the province this spring as we continue to work together with Nova Scotians to make sure the aging process is a positive one for Nova Scotia's seniors.

In other Secretariat news, we are pleased to have recently hired Jeannine Jessome as our new Research/Policy Analyst. Jeannine worked with us previously as a summer student in 1997. Nadine Landry has also recently joined the Secretariat as Administrative Assistant. Nadine has worked with the province for four years in various capacities.

On behalf of the staff at the Seniors' Secretariat, I wish you and your loved ones all the best for the holiday season.

Valerie

From left to right: Nadine Landry, Natasha Boyce, Jane Phillips, Jane Cowie, Valerie White, Jeannine Jessome, Nancy Radcliffe, Barb Baker, Heather Praught, Marguerite McMillan, Karen Kelloway, and Jane Mayer.

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Seniors' News

Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice

The Secretariat newsletter is published four times a year by the Seniors' Secretariat and distributed free of charge. We welcome letters, articles, and items of interest from you. Please include your name, address, and telephone number on all correspondence. The Seniors' Secretariat was established in 1980 to facilitate the planning and development of services and programs for seniors by coordinating plans, policies, and programs presented by the departments of the provincial government. The Secretariat serves as a one-door entry to government for seniors, seniors' groups, and other provincial bodies concerned with aging issues. The Secretariat develops plans, policies, and programs in partnership with other levels of government and agencies responsible for seniors.

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Seniors' Secretariat

NOVA SCOTIA

Elder Abuse Awareness Day Forum a Success!

On November 2, 2005, the Nova Scotia Seniors' Secretariat and the Nova Scotia Department of Justice co-sponsored a forum in celebration of the province's first-ever Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The day-long event brought together more than 125 people, including representatives from seniors' and community groups and health and justice professionals. The forum provided participants with an opportunity to focus on many aspects related to the oppression and abuse of older adults.

The day opened with a welcome from Valerie White, Executive Director of the Secretariat. The Chair of the Secretariat, the Honourable Angus MacIsaac, read the proclamation of Elder Abuse Awareness Day on behalf of the Premier of Nova Scotia and released the *Nova Scotia Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention.* As the Minister Responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the honourable Carolyn Bolivar-Getson also provided remarks, emphasizing the high degree of incidence of abuse of older women.

A series of presentations highlighted the role of the Seniors' Secretariat, what elder abuse is (including the different types of abuse, issues to consider in understanding elder abuse, and the importance of open dialogue and the impact of ageism), and the focus of the strategy. The strategy identifies priority actions to begin to increase awareness, prevent abuse, and reduce the incidence of abuse in Nova Scotia. Updates were given on the Adult Protection Act and Protection for Persons in Care Act and a panel discussion highlighted successes and the panel guests' unique perspectives and experiences in the prevention and response to elder abuse.

During breakout sessions in the afternoon, participants shared information on programs and initiatives aimed at preventing and responding to elder abuse. They also discussed their own role in the prevention of abuse and explored opportunities for action at a community level, including identifying what works well in their communities now and where gaps exist.

Forum evaluation results show that participants generally considered the day to be a great success and an important and worthwhile first step in addressing this complex issue. The need for more consultation, education and awareness was emphasized, as was the need to consider rural issues and addressing the root causes of abuse against older adults.

The *Nova Scotia Elder Abuse Strategy: Towards Awareness and Prevention* and other information on elder abuse can be found on the Seniors' Secretariat website at **www.gov.ns.ca/scs** or by calling **1-800-670-0065** (toll-free) or **424-0065.**

A full proceedings report of the Forum will be available in December 2005 and copies of the presentations will soon be available on the Secretariat website.

CAG Conference

Jane Mayer, Project Officer for the Seniors' Secretariat, talks to a conference attendee at the Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG) conference in October.

Farewell to Mary

The Honourable Angus MacIsaac with Mary Boutilier, Administrative Assistant, at her retirement celebration in October. Mary worked at the Secretariat for 20 years and is well known for her helpfulness and wonderful sense of humour.

Province Sets the Stage for Aging Population

Nova Scotia will be better prepared to help its seniors enjoy healthy, happy, and productive lives in the future thanks to the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia* released December 13.

"The strategy is a comprehensive and important tool that will help us think ahead and plan better," said Education Minister Jamie Muir, who released the strategy on behalf of Angus MacIsaac, Minister responsible for the Seniors' Secretariat. "We cannot, and should not, understate the value of solid planning today to ensure that, 10, 15 or 20 years down the road, Nova Scotia is ready and able to help its rapidly growing seniors' population enjoy a healthy, happy and productive future."

Nova Scotia has Canada's second highest percentage of people aged 65 and older, and governments at all levels will be increasingly challenged to sustain, expand and improve services to meet seniors' needs in the face of growing demands and increased costs.

More than 1,000 Nova Scotians, in more than 30 communities, helped develop the strategy in conjunction with the recently established Task Force on Aging.

Nova Scotia's Strategy for Positive Aging, one of the first in Canada, identifies 190 actions aimed at achieving nine key goals: celebrating seniors; financial security; health and well-being; maximizing independence; housing options; transportation; respecting diversity; employment and life transitions; and supportive communities.

"The strategy provides a beacon that guides us all to the place where we want to be – a safe, secure, and supportive community," said Brenda Montgomery, a senior, full-time primary caregiver, and member of the Task Force on Aging advisory committee.

Valerie White, executive director, Nova Scotia Seniors' Secretariat said the strategy emphasizes that positive aging is both a personal and societal issue. "Positive aging focuses on promoting individual responsibility when it comes to making good lifestyle choices, as well as on the broader role families, communities and governments can play in ensuring seniors receive the supports they need to enjoy quality of life," she said.

The Task Force on Aging – which includes seniors, as well as representatives from a wide range of government departments and agencies -- will use the strategy to develop a detailed action plan designed to ensure the provincial government and other key stakeholders more fully consider, plan and respond to the needs of Nova Scotia's aging population.

The Strategy for Positive Aging is available by calling the seniors' toll-free information line, **1-800-670-0065**, or by visiting the Seniors' Secretariat website at **www.gov.ns.ca/scs/**.

Bernie LaRusic is interviewed by GlobalTV.

Valerie White and Nancy Radcliffe greet the nearly 60 stakeholders who attended the launch of the Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia.

The Art of Last Minute Shopping

The Senior's Art and Photo Gallery located at the World Trade and Convention Centre is a great place to shop for one-of-a-kind, reasonably priced gifts. The gallery displays art and photos created by Nova Scotian artists 50 years of age and up. Art is displayed in various forms including oil, watercolours, acrylic, pastels, as well as colour and black and white photography. Drop by any day between 9 am and 6 pm. Displays change every two months.

Thanks to Joan Code whose painting Apple Harvest *has been used for promotional signage for the art and photo gallery.*

LIFELONG LEARNING

Older Workers Benefit from New Career Resource

After 20 years in the tourism and hospitality industry, Elizabeth Langille was ready for a change. The Tatamagouche resident, in her early 60s, had been limited to seasonal work at close to minimum wage and was on unemployment when she walked into the Open Doors Career Resource Centre looking to update her resume.

Instead, the local client navigator, a career resource centre (CRC) staff person dedicated to helping older workers take advantage of new job opportunities and gain key workplace skills, found her a full-time position as a housekeeping supervisor in less than a month.

"I was in a rut and didn't think to look for anything else," said Langille. "I was impressed with what the client navigator was able to do. She helped me update my resume and get a full-time job. I didn't realize I had as much experience as I do."

Client navigators are a vital resource to help Nova Scotians between the ages of 55 and 64 re-enter the workforce. As part of the Older Worker Pilot Project Initiative, Service Canada and the Nova Scotia Department of Education provided funding for Career Resource Centres (CRCs) across Nova Scotia to hire 15 older worker client navigators.

"People feel that age is a barrier to employment when they're looking for a job," said Elly Danica, Client Navigator, Acadia Centre for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ACSBE) Resource Centre in Bridgewater. "These people have a great deal of experience and a wide range of skills to draw from, it's just a question of navigating the employment system. It's also essential to educate employers on the benefits of hiring older workers or keeping them in the workforce."

The Older Workers Pilot Project was developed to address aging demographics in the province and to help older workers address the unique barriers they face in looking for employment or maintaining existing positions. The project provides older workers with the support, guidance and resources they need to pursue income-earning activities with the assistance of staff at CRCs.

"As Nova Scotia's population ages, it's more important than ever to ensure older workers remain in the workforce," said Stuart Gourley, Senior Executive Director, Skills and Learning Branch, Department of Education. "Client navigators on a local level help identify and obtain job opportunities in the community that many older workers would have missed." The navigators provide help with resume writing and job search strategies, as well as workshops and information on employment and self employment opportunities.

"The Older Worker Pilot Project has been up and running for more than a year now, and we've seen major progress among the participants," said Shawnna Keddy, Community Development Project Coordinator of the Acadia Centre for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ACSBE) that coordinates the Older Workers Client Navigator program in partnership with the provincial and federal governments. "Based on this success, the CRCs received funding to put client navigators in place across the province. So far the response has been exceptional."

Older Worker Client Navigators are accessible at Career Resource Centres in Amherst, Bridgewater, Digby, Elmsdale, Guysborough, Halifax, Kentville, New Glasgow, New Waterford, North Sydney, Sackville, Shelburne, Tatamagouche, Tusket and Windsor.

For more information about the Older Worker Pilot Project Initiative or contact information for the client navigators, please visit the website **www.ageadvantage.ca** or call **1-877-232-2723** (toll-free) and ask to speak to Elly Danica.

The Older Workers Pilot Project is part of the provincial government's skills initiative, Skills Nova Scotia. The initiative is dedicated to building Nova Scotia's skilled workforce by providing education and training opportunities.

Contact List for Older Worker Client Navigators

Name	Career Resource Centre	Town	Phone
Carrie Lynn Wall	Job Junction	Halifax	(902) 455-0592
Dave MacLean	Career Connections	New Glasgow	(902) 755-2160
Lenore Sweeney	Digby Career Resource Centre	Digby	(902) 245-7540
Judy Davis	Open Doors Career Resource Centre	Tatamagouche	(902) 657-0180
Jo-Anne Binns	New Waterford & Area Employment Resource Centre	New Waterford	(902) 862-8856
Jo-Anne Binns	YMCA Glace Bay – New Waterford Outreach Centre	Glace Bay	(902) 849-5500
Ann Marie Viner	Valley African Nova Scotian Development Association	Kentville	(902) 678-7410
Joan LaPierre	Job Search Centre	Elmsdale	(902) 883-7010
Carl Bond	Guysborough County CBDC	Guysborough	(902) 366-2428
TBA	Cumberland Region Economic Development Association	Amherst	(902) 667-3638
Pauline d'Entremont	Universite Sainte-Anne, Tusket Campus	Tusket	(902) 648-3508
Ben Gale	Entrepreneurial Centre	North Sydney	(902) 794-7213
Elly Danica	ACSBE Resource Centre	Bridgewater	(902) 543-1067
Karen Ferguson	Job Resource Centre	Windsor	(902) 798-6650
Lisa Bond	Shelburne CRC	Shelburne	(902) 875-5412
Linda Zaluska	Opportunity Place Career Resource Centre	Sackville	(902) 869-3846

The young man knows the rules, but the old man knows the exceptions.
– Oliver Wendell Holmes

The Seniorpreneur Course

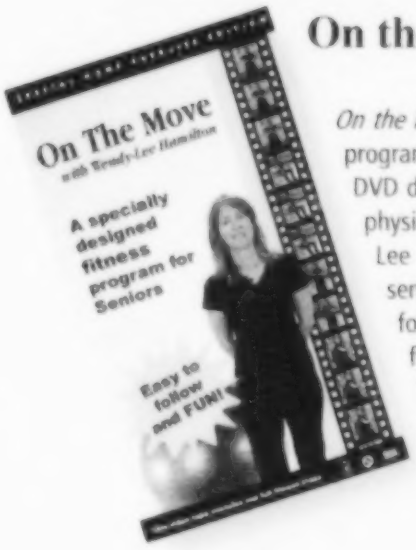
Nova Scotia Community College – Continuing Education

There is a new momentum in small business start-ups and entrepreneurs age 55+ are largely responsible. One in four new businesses are started by seniorpreneurs.

Under the aegis of the Northwood Community Centre and the Seniorpreneur Association, this course will prepare seniors for small business start-up.

When the course is completed each participant should have developed a business plan suitable for a funding application. All of the small business management elements will be covered in this 42-hour course running from January 21 to April 22, 2006, every Saturday – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. The instructor is Jack Jones, a seniorpreneur. Call the Nova Scotia Community College Admissions **491-4911** to register.

HEALTHY LIVING



On the Move

On the Move is exercise program on video/ DVD designed by physiotherapist Wendy-Lee Hamilton to give seniors an easy to follow and fun fitness program. The program was funded by the Western King's Community Health Board through a Wellness Initiative Grant. The video and DVD cost $15 plus shipping. For more information, e-mail Wendy-Lee at **wlh@accesscable.net** or phone the Western King's Community Health Board answering machine at **(902) 538-7088**.

Mouth Matters: Did you know?

Submitted by Sue MacIntosh, Dental Hygienist

- That the most common cause of dry mouth is medication?
- That older adults with dry mouths get more cavities?
- That sipping and rinsing with club soda helps dry mouth problems?
- That dental check-ups are just as important as medical check- ups?
- That dentures should be removed at least 4-6 hours each day to give mouth tissues a rest?
- That the health of the mouth is directly related to the health of the body?
- That dentures that do not fit well can cause other mouth problems?
- That even if you have complete dentures, it is still important to visit the dentist regularly?
- That it is important to daily brush your tongue to remove odour causing bacteria?

Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

By Gloria Tsang RD
Source:
www.healthcastle.com/holiday-eating-tips.shtml

- Don't go to a party hungry: we often eat faster and more when we are hungry – therefore eat a wholesome breakfast and lunch on the day of the party to avoid overeating.

- Watch your portion: treat yourself to a nice drink, dessert, chocolate or sweets without guilt, but always watch your portion. Go for small portions. This way you can sample all the different foods. Moderation is always the key.

- Make a conscious choice to limit high fat items: high fat food items can be found in fried food, cream-based soup, cheese-filled casseroles, pies, processed meats such as salami and sausages, some pastries and baked goods.

- Try different versions of eggnog: traditional eggnog is usually made with egg yolk and thick cream. Google <low fat eggnog> and you will find lots of low fat eggnog recipes. If you buy commercial eggnog, you will be delighted to find low-fat or fat-free eggnog out there – we can even find soy nog!

- Try other versions of alcohol: instead of beer, cider, Bailey's and Kahlua, try dry wine, Bloody Mary's or spirits with diet mixer which have fewer calories. Remember: calories from alcohol tend to be stored in the abdomen. People who are overweight actually gain weight more easily when they consume alcohol.

- Drink plenty of water: alcohol and coffee can dehydrate your body.

- Physical activity: take nice brisk walks with your loved ones and enjoy their company in the holiday season.

Nova Scotia Power Critical Customer Communication Program

Nova Scotia Power has a Critical Customer Communication Program for customers who rely on electricity for life support, such as oxygen therapy, or critical home care. The program provides important information about planned power outages, restoration time changes, and unplanned power outages expected to last more than four hours. The information will be provided via telephone for those who are registered.

For more information, call **(902) 428-6230** (Metro), **1-800-428-6230** (toll-free) or visit **www.nspower.ca**.

Life's tragedy is that we get old too soon and wise too late.
– Benjamin Franklin

SAFETY

Making Your Home Safe for Holiday Fun!

Submitted by Child Safety Link

If you aren't used to having young children around all the time, now is a good time to start to prepare your home for those holiday visits! As most of you know, young children can be injured unnecessarily and we'd like to help you prevent those injuries.

Some general household safety tips to consider when preparing for children to visit:

- Cover exposed electrical outlets that would be visible to children
- Remove small decorations and liquid candles
- Install safety gates on stairwells
- Do not display snacks like nuts and hard candies. These can be a choking hazard for children
- Remove tablecloths and, if necessary, use place mats
- Keep all cosmetics, perfume, aftershave and nail polish removers out of reach
- Keep all lighters, matches and cigarettes out of reach
- Store medications out of reach
- Do not place medication on counters or tables to remind you to take them. Children can quickly reach these medications.
- Keep all plants out of reach. Plants that are not poisonous can still be a choking hazard for small children
- Check your smoke detector to ensure that it is in proper working order
- Be sure the tree is firmly anchored so it can't fall on a child

Make sure that a responsible adult is always watching the small children that are visiting. Make sure your house is safe for them by covering electrical outlets, barring stairwells and removing furniture and decorations that may be hazardous to children. These are a few tips to ensure that you have a safe and happy holiday. Making these few changes to your home environment will help prevent unnecessary injuries to children but they do not replace adult supervision.

Child Safety Link would like to wish all families a safe and happy holiday season. For more information on preventing injuries to children you can visit our website at **www.childsafetylink.ca** or call **1-866-288-1388** (toll-free).

Nova Scotia Injury Prevention Strategy

Submitted by the Office of Health Promotion

Injury remains the leading cause of preventable death for Nova Scotians age one to 45, killing more people under the age of 20 than all other causes of death combined. In fact, on average, 450 Nova Scotians die each year as a result of injury. Thousands more suffer serious injuries, many of which lead to permanent disability and ongoing pain and suffering. Every year in Nova Scotia, there are approximately 350,000 emergency department visits, and 6,000 hospitalizations due to injury.

From an economic perspective, injury costs Nova Scotians nearly $600 million each year.

Beyond these alarming statistics are the individuals whose lives are forever changed as a result of injury. We must not forget that behind every

injured person, there is a network of family, friends, co-workers, and often entire communities who are deeply affected.

The good news is that we have the ability to change these numbers and prevent the horrific impact of injury. It is widely accepted that 95 per cent of injuries are predictable and preventable. Managing risk and creating safer environments are two strategies that help reduce injury. Simple changes such as increasing helmet, car seat and seat belt use, fall-proofing your home, and using safety equipment in the workplace, are just a few ways to prevent injury.

Each year, one in three Nova Scotians over 65 will experience a fall. This statistic doubles for patients over age 80. With 90 per cent of hip fractures resulting from a fall and 40 per cent of nursing home admissions associated with a fall, we cannot afford to ignore this issue.

We all have a role in injury prevention and the province is doing its part too. In the fall of 2003, Nova Scotia Health Promotion initiated an injury prevention strategy for Nova Scotia, which was developed with input from over 160 multi-sectoral stakeholders. In the past two years an investment of nearly $1 million has gone into the implementation of the strategy. This includes funding to address the prevention of three designated priority areas – falls, motor vehicle crashes and self-inflicted injury. In addition, Nova Scotia Health Promotion has been working with partners to develop and implement an injury surveillance strategy; developing a road safety social marketing strategy with road safety stakeholders; supporting capacity development through the delivery of the Canadian Injury Prevention & Control Curriculum; and taking a lead on developing healthy public policies that support prevention efforts. There are now 12 established regional falls prevention coalitions across Nova Scotia to help build community capacity to address falls and work with seniors to prevent fall-related injuries.

These past two years have served as a growth period to build a foundation and put the right resources in place. The strategy recognizes all injuries among all age groups, and will address areas such as education and public awareness, legislation and enforcement, public policy, engineering and monitoring and surveillance. The ability to collect information about serious injury is an essential component of a comprehensive injury prevention strategy.

Nova Scotia remains the only province in Canada with a provincially-funded injury prevention strategy. Nova Scotia Health Promotion was established to improve the health of Nova Scotians, and injury prevention plays a large part in that.

The best long-term solution to decrease the burden of injury on our health care system is to keep people healthy. The injury prevention strategy is bringing Nova Scotians closer to being a healthier province.

For more information about the Nova Scotia Injury Prevention Strategy or the projects discussed above, please contact Julian Young, Coordinator, Injury Prevention & Control, Nova Scotia Health Promotion **(902) 424-5362** or **youngjb@gov.ns.ca**. A copy of the strategy can also be found on the Nova Scotia Health Promotion website at **www.gov.ns.ca/ohp/injuryprevention.html**.

NOTES OF INTEREST

More Funding for Home Repairs

Submitted by the Department of Community Services

Low-income Nova Scotians will get help financing home repairs thanks to an additional $2 million in funding. Nova Scotia has some of the highest rates of home ownership in the country, and some of the oldest homes.

To qualify for housing repair program grants, total household income must be below set income thresholds. Eligible household income levels are determined by where an applicant lives in Nova Scotia and by household size.

David Morse, Minister of Community Services, announced on November 7, that the additional funding will be available under the Senior Citizens Assistance Program and the Provincial Housing Emergency Repair Program.

"Housing repair programs help keep Nova Scotians in their homes by ensuring that those homes meet current health and safety standards," said Mr. Morse. "These allow families to maintain homes that might have otherwise been lost to them."

The Senior Citizens Assistance Program provides funding for lower income applicants over the age of 65 who would like to remain in their own homes but are not able to afford the necessary repairs. Grants of up to $5,000 are available for repairs which ensure that health and safety standards are met. For example, this may include repairs to roofing, plumbing and heating.

Grants of up to $5,000 are also available under the Provincial Housing Emergency Repair Program for lower income Nova Scotians who need help to make emergency repairs to their homes. Examples of emergency home repairs may include fixing or replacing heating, plumbing, electrical systems or roofing.

The province also recently increased the maximum household income threshold amounts so that more people can access these housing repair programs.

Information on home repair programs is available at local housing services offices or on the Department of Community Services website at **www.gov.ns.ca/coms**.

Social Development Canada Consultations

Seniors are invited to participate in Social Development Canada's (SDC) online consultation at **www.sdc.gc.ca**. Through the seniors' consultation, which is ongoing until December 30, SDC hopes to learn more about the experiences of Canadians who are retired and those who are looking ahead to retirement years.

You can participate in the online consultation in two ways:

1. Share your stories and ideas on the challenges faced by seniors and those planning their retirement, as well as what you think could be done to better support them.

2. Complete the "Canadian Seniors: Today and Tomorrow" workbook that explores some of the challenges faced by seniors and those planning for retirement, and then share what you believe should be the most important priorities for action.

For more information on SDC or if you have questions about the consultation, call toll-free **1-800-622-6232** (1-800-O Canada). If you use a TTY, call **1-800-465-7735**.

Northwood Announces New Name for Service

Submitted by Northwood

For over 40 years, Northwood has been a strong advocate for seniors and their right to live life to the fullest. Throughout its history, Northwood has played a leading role in developing programs and services that respond to needs of older adults and people at risk.

One of Northwood's most successful programs is its personal emergency response service that helps people live independently in their own home. With the press of a button, clients at risk can summon the help they need when they need it. The service provides peace of mind to families and enables the client to remain independent in their own home. For almost 20 years, Northwood acted as a distributor for Lifeline Canada. As part of a regular review of programs and to ensure it continues to meet the client needs, Northwood has made a decision to move to another supplier.

Northwood is pleased to announce its new product line that offers more features, enhanced capabilities and exciting new possibilities. With a new brand, comes a new name – Northwood Intouch, Personal Emergency Response.

Northwood Intouch is owned and operated by Northwood. Clients will continue to receive the same reliable service that they have come to know and trust. As in the past, Northwood will continue to partner with service groups throughout the province to help it install and service the units.

Remember the new name – Northwood Intouch, Personal Emergency Response. It can still be reached the old number **492-3346** or **1-800-461-3346** (toll free).

Holiday Gift Ideas

Submitted by Colchester Regional Community Links

Dear Editor,
As the busy season of Advent begins, we at Colchester Regional "Preventing Fall's Together" (Community Links) have come up with a list of holiday gift Ideas to help everyone with their shopping. When you are shopping for the older adults on your list, keep in mind things they can use to keep themselves safe and healthy throughout the year.

How about:

- Emergency lights that come on if there is a power failure.
- Outdoor lighting that is motion sensitive.
- Night lights that come on automatically when light levels drop.
- New sneakers with elastic shoelaces or Velcro closures.
- Cordless phone that they can carry.

- Gift certificate for clothing alterations.
- Ice repellant, sand or kitty litter in manageable sized tubs.
- Meals on Wheels or Frozen Favorites (VON).
- Proper step stool with a hand grip.
- Taxi vouchers.
- Home safety equipment: grab bars for bathroom (toilet, shower, tub), a raised toilet seat with arm rails, a bath seat, non-skid bath mat, tub resurfacing.
- Hire a carpenter to upgrade stairs, banisters, and railings indoors and out.
- Coloured or reflective tape for the edge of stairs or thresholds.
- A lightweight shopping or laundry cart.
- Hire housekeeping or offer to do it yourself.
- An automatic garage door opener.
- Design and practice a fire escape plan.
- Vial of Life medication list, and a plan to update it for them regularly.
- "Reacher" tool to grasp items above arms reach.
- Fitness gift certificate (personal fitness trainer or Tai Chi group).
- Hip Protector undergarments.
- "Icers" boot grips for winter.
- A "cool" cane with an ice tip or trendy walking poles.
- Long handled shoe-horn.
- Medic Alert bracelet that they have neglected to get for themselves.
- Medical Alarm system that can be pressed to summon help.
- Gift certificate for snow removal service, home repairs or yard work.
- Reminders or transportation to appointments.

Visit the Annapolis Valley Safe Communities website **www.safekingscounty.ca** and review *The First Step: Falls Prevention Starts with You.* This identifies the risk factors for falls and lists the local Valley resources you may access.

Keep the Heat Applications Now Available

Low-income Nova Scotians may now apply for assistance under the province's Keep the Heat program.

More than 25,000 application packages have been sent to recipients of last year's program, and others who feel they may be eligible are encouraged to apply, said Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations Minister Barry Barnet.

Keep the Heat offers a cash rebate of $250 for eligible applicants who heat their homes with oil or propane. For those who heat with electricity, wood, coal, wood pellets or natural gas, a $100 rebate is available.

Families with net annual incomes under $25,000 and single people under $15,000 qualify. Rebates for those who heat with oil or propane will increase 25 per cent over last year, to $250. Users of other fuels and electricity will be able to apply for a $100 rebate.

"This program offers immediate and long-term help to low income Nova Scotians, and I urge anyone who thinks they may be eligible to apply," said Mr. Barnet. "Applications are available at Access Nova Scotia centres, from MLAs, local Community Services offices, on the government website, or by calling our toll-free number."

Everyone eligible for a rebate will receive a free energy savings kit, valued at $50, to help them achieve permanent energy savings. Oil users may also be eligible for a furnace tune-up voucher. Also, as part of a Keep the Heat pilot program, 3,000 electricity users will qualify to have thermostats in their homes replaced with more accurate models that reduce electricity use. Applications and more information about Keep the Heat are available at **1-800-670-4357** (toll-free) or at **www.gov.ns.ca**.

Remembrance Train

Submitted by Susan M. Cameron

Growing up in a railway town, the daughter of a soldier father and a war-bride mother, trains – and war – have been part of my heritage. When I learned of the special Remembrance Train, due to leave Halifax for Ottawa over the November 11 weekend, I booked immediately.

A military honour guard greeted us at the station entrance on departure morning. Inside were throngs of people: reporters and camera crews, Red Hatters and railway staff, friends and relations, a choir and a band. When our boarding call was announced, we followed our veterans – dressed in their navy blazers, vintage uniforms, berets and Glengarries – past the well-wishers and the dignitaries and onto our waiting train.

Soon after midday we were pulling out, skirting the city and Basin slowly, picking up speed as we headed toward Truro. At every whistle stop and station, large crowds with flags and thank-you signs cheered and waved at us. We blew kisses and waved back, overcome at the outpouring of emotion from our fellow Canadians.

During lunch a barber shop quartet serenaded us with the old familiar favorites: We'll Meet Again, Bell Bottom Trousers, Kiss Me Goodnight, Sgt. Major, The White Cliffs of Dover. Hours later, we fell asleep to the rhythm of the wheels as we rumbled across northern New Brunswick, toward the St. Lawrence River valley.

We arrived in Ottawa to more fanfare and two full days of events. Most of the veterans on our train were able to march in the parade to and from the National War Monument. How proud we were, watching them troop past with arms swinging and heads held high. After a delicious lunch at the

North Shore New Brunswick Regiment members Norman Kirby, Steward MacDonald and Harold Henshaw on the Veterans Train in November.

Photo courtesy of Veterans Affairs Canada.

Chateau Laurier, we enjoyed an afternoon tour of the War Museum. Then, too soon, it was morning again, as we headed back to our waiting train.

The journey home was filled with nostalgia and memory. I chatted with several veterans who, like my own father, had sacrificed years of their youth in service "over there."

"We did what we could for democracy," said one former infantry soldier. "Even if we were scared we might be blown to bits any moment. There are no atheists in the front lines; every last one of us prayed."

After dinner, we trekked to the rear dome car for more music. "Only fifteen cars," one veteran wisecracked. "No rifle, no backpack. Heck, this is child's play." We sang and danced into the wee morning hours. When the piano player got tired, "Big Duke", of the North Shore Regiment and now retired in Moncton, took over the keyboard.

A hero's welcome awaited at the Halifax station. Friends, family and strangers reached out, grasped hands, hugged our veteran friends as though

they'd been away for six long years rather than a mere four days. "Thank you, thank you," was the repeated message to our veterans.

And what is theirs, to us? Simple, yet profound. "Keep the faith, and the peace. And please, do not ever forget."

Susan Cameron is a Halifax based writer. Her father, Aubrey S. Rodenhiser, was a C.S.M. with the West Nova Scotia Regiment, serving in England and Italy. Her mother was a resident of London, England during the war years. Susan and her mother came to Canada after the war's end, arriving at Pier 21.

Affirmative Action Report Released

Submitted by the Public Service Commission

Departments and agencies throughout the provincial government have been developing plans to become a more diverse workforce and to achieve employment equity in the public service for women, aboriginal people, persons with disabilities, African Nova Scotians and other racially visible people.

"Our goal is to be representative, at all levels, of the people we serve," said Human Resources Minister Carolyn Bolivar-Getson.

The initiatives are outlined in the province's 2004-05 report on affirmative action, *Moving Toward Equity, Affirmative Action, and Diversity in the Nova Scotia Public Service*, which was tabled in the legislature on November 3.

"Workforce diversity can do more than prevent discrimination and increase employment opportunities to under-represented groups," said Ms. Bolivar-Getson. "We benefit by having competitively relevant knowledge about how we can do our work differently and better."

Government has been doing many things to become more representative of the people it serves, including:

- a redesign of the mandatory diversity and employment equity training for government employees;
- development of three-year affirmative action plans by all government departments;
- creation of a Valuing Diversity Round Table with representation from key departments and stakeholder agencies and commissions;
- development of a corporate diversity action plan that will provide direction to the initiative over the next three years;
- revitalization of the affirmative action inventory of employees, including its renaming as the diversity talent pool;
- establishment of the Diversity Accommodation Fund to help departments, agencies, boards and commissions hire persons with disabilities who may need some job accommodations upon their entry.

"This report gives an overview of progress we have made, our plans for the future, and reaffirms government's commitment to affirmative action and diversity," said Ms. Bolivar-Getson.

A copy of the annual report is available on the website at **www.gov.ns.ca/psc**.

The Seniors' Secretariat is represented on the government's Diversity Round Table and is working with the Public Service Commission and other government departments, agencies, boards and commissions to become a more diverse workforce.

While the Secretariat staff is small, through our numerous committees, such as the Elder Abuse Prevention committee and the Task Force on Aging, we seek out and appreciate having representation and input from people with varying backgrounds and regions throughout the province.

Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art.
– Eleanor Roosevelt

UPCOMING EVENTS

Seniors Health Information Sessions

The QEII Health Sciences Centre offers free information sessions for seniors periodically throughout the year. All sessions take place on Mondays from 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm in the Royal Bank Theatre, Halifax Infirmary, QEII Health Sciences Centre, Summer Street and feature topics as listed below. For more information, call **(902) 473-8603**.

- Caregiving, February 27, 2006
- Nutrition Tips and Myths, March 27, 2006
- Skin Care, April 24, 2006
- Exercise, May 29, 2006
- New Technology for Hearing Loss, June 26, 2006

Knowledge is the Best Medicine

One of the objectives of the Seniors' Secretariat is to improve the health and quality of life for seniors living in Nova Scotia. In partnership with Rx&D, the Nova Scotia Medication Awareness Committee, which has been established by the Secretariat, has developed a number of projects to encourage the appropriate use of medications. The first of these projects is the *Knowledge is the best medicine* brochure.

This brochure provides helpful hints to improve your knowledge about the medications you take. It identifies information you should seek from doctors, pharmacists and nurses. It will help you understand what you can do to maintain and improve your health.

A medication record booklet is also included for you to record important personal medical information. You can list all of your medicines, what they are for and when they should be taken.

The *Knowledge is the best medicine* brochure is also available en français. Complementary copies can be obtained from your pharmacist or by calling the Rx&D order desk toll free at **1-800-363-0203**.

If you have questions about this program or other programs and services for seniors, call the Nova Scotia Seniors' Secretariat at **1-800-670-0065** (toll-free).

Remember, your medication record booklet is only useful if it is up-to-date and if it is used properly.

Be a star at the fourth annual 50+

StarSearch

Talent Contest

June 9 & 10, 2006
Exhibition Park

50+ Expo is pleased to present Nova Scotia's fourth annual 50+ Talent Contest. This contest is open to amateur performers over the age of 50. There are two divisions – Group and Single – and four categories in each division – Dance, Instrumental, Vocal and Other (magicians, comedians, etc.). A maximum of eight entrants will be accepted per category. The top two contestants will have a maximum of five minutes to perform on our 40' x 30' main stage with PA system including microphones, tape deck and CD changer. Judging will be done by a panel of professionals from the music industry and contest sponsors. One **Grand Prize of $2500 cash** will be awarded to the most original performance.

To enter, complete the registration form (below) and submit along with $15 registration fee by April 21, 2006.

$2500 CASH GRAND PRIZE

CATEGORIES:

Single Division	Group Division
• Instrumental	• Instrumental
• Vocal	• Vocal
• Dance	• Dance
• Other	• Other

50+ Talent Contest 2006 Registration Form

Rules and Regulations

- Registration form must be sent to 50+ Expo with the appropriate registration and category fees.
- Registration fee is $15.
- Each additional category after the first category is $5.
- There will be no refunds for missed performances or any other reason.
- Prizes may alter without prior notice.
- 50+ is not responsible for any lost registration forms.
- Registrations will not be accepted at time of talent search, and must be received by April 21, 2006.
- Participants registered with a talent agency and or with agent or representation in their chosen category are not eligible to participate in this talent search.
- Award winners from Star Search 2005 are not eligible to compete in Star Search 2006. All winners from 2005 will be invited to attend Star Search 2006.
- Photocopies and faxes of registration forms are NOT acceptable. Authentic signatures are mandatory.
- Registration deadline is April 21, 2006.
- Performers are to provide pre-approved backup music.
- Participants entering in Vocal or Instrumental please submit a cassette or CD of your recording. Participants entering in Dance or Other please submit a VHS tape of your routine.

I hereby authorize and agree to the use of my name and photograph for advertising/promotion purposes in the 50+ Talent Contest. I claim no compensation in respect of such use, or for any damages arising therefrom. I also agree to the rules and regulations stated above. Judges' decisions are final and binding.

50+ Expo
1740 Granville Street, PO Box 2065
Halifax, NS B3J 2Z1
Phone 423-5608 or 424-5407
Toll-free 800-670-0065
www.50plusexpo.ns.ca

Programs for

Seniors

2005

16th edition

This 136-page directory features information about active living, health care, transportation, housing, finances, legal matters, and more.

Pick up a free copy at your local pharmacy or library. You may also find it in Sobey's stores, doctor's offices, hospitals, seniors' centres, and clubs.

Multiple copies of *Programs for Seniors* can be sent to groups and organizations upon request.

To request a copy:
1-800-670-0065 (toll-free)
(902) 424-0065 (within HRM)
E-mail scs@gov.ns.ca
Website www.gov.ns.ca/scs

Seniors' Secretariat

Seniors' **News**

Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice

View this issue on-line!

All of our newsletters are available on our website at **www.gov.ns.ca/scs**.

Mail or Email?

In an effort to cut printing costs and reduce the amount of paper we are using, we are asking you, the readers, to let us know if you would like to be added to our email distribution list instead of receiving a printed copy in the mail. Every little bit helps and we ask for your support.

Please email: **scs@gov.ns.ca**
or call the Secretariat's information line toll-free at **1-800-670-0065** or **(902) 424-0065**.